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—Dateline..... Brattleboro  
—Article Number:..... 43375



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 BMH nurses vote to authorize strike

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2 Both nurses, management have agreed to continue  
3 negotiations on March 31

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) nurses voted on  
6 March 23 to authorize a strike if necessary.

7 No date for a strike has been set. According to a news  
8 release, an “overwhelming supermajority” of BMH nurses,  
9 represented by the Brattleboro Federation of Nurses (BFN), voted  
10 for the strike authorization.

11 The vote follows what BFN called “stalled negotiations,  
12 with management continuing to propose concessions that nurses  
13 say would hurt patient care and drive staff away.”

14 As described by the union, proposals by BMH  
15 management include no wage increases for three years, cuts to  
16 differentials for frontline workers (extra pay or additional benefits  
17 given to workers who are in higher-risk, higher-demand, or more  
18 exposed roles), a reduction in retirement contributions, forcing  
19 spouses off family insurance if they qualify for benefits elsewhere,  
20 cuts to paid time off, and rollbacks of union rights.

21 “Our community is at a tipping point,” said Tracy  
22 Ouellette, BFN president and BMH nurse. “If these cuts move  
23 forward, we’re going to lose more nurses, and patients will feel it  
24 in longer waits, less support, and less consistent care. We don’t  
25 want to see that happen here.”

26 Nurses say the authorization vote reflects the seriousness  
27 of the situation and the stakes for the community.

28 “We don’t take this decision lightly,” said Ouellette “But  
29 we are prepared to do what it takes to protect our community  
30 hospital and make sure it remains a place where patients can get  
31 safe, reliable care.”

32 Management at the hospital responded via a news  
33 release, asserting that BMH is “engaged in ongoing, good-faith  
34 negotiations with the union and remains ready to continue  
35 discussions to reach a fair and sustainable agreement.”

36 Both parties have agreed to continue negotiations on  
37 Tuesday, March 31.

38 “We are committed to addressing the concerns of our  
39 nursing staff while ensuring the hospital’s ability to serve the  
40 community without disruption,” hospital officials wrote.

41 “Our nurses are critical to the care we provide, and we  
42 value their dedication and expertise,” said Dr. Elizabeth  
43 McLarney, BMH acting co-CEO. “At the same time, we must  
44 balance these needs with the responsibility to maintain a  
45 financially stable, high-functioning hospital. We urge the union

46 to continue negotiating in good faith so we can avoid any  
47 disruption to patient care.”

48 In the meantime, BMH management said it “is taking all  
49 necessary precautions to maintain full operational readiness and  
50 protect patient safety during this time. We remain hopeful that  
51 continued dialogue will lead to a constructive resolution that  
52 meets the needs of both our staff and our patients.”

53 BFN says its nurses “remain focused on reaching a fair  
54 agreement and are urging hospital leadership to come back with  
55 proposals that support caregivers, strengthen patient care, and  
56 protect the hospital’s future in the community.”

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